

# REFLECTIONS

By Wayne C. Neely  
Frederick, Maryland

The day of the "World's Fair" appears over; none will mark the Bicentennial. In 1876, however, the Centennial, and again in 1926, the Sesqui-Centennial were notable events, each held in Philadelphia, each marked by a large livestock show, with Shorthorns the leading beef breed.

The 1876 Centennial saw nearly 100 Shorthorns shown, including several herds from Canada and one from England. This figure probably omits cattle brought in by three breeders for a public auction at the Exhibition and a recently arrived importation of one of the exhibitors awaiting shipment to his Kansas farm.

An elaborate system of written reports by a Committee of Judges replaced the familiar ranking of animals 1-2-3-4 in their respective classes. Judges made General Reports on breeds, noting animals of "superlative merit," and Special Reports on individual animals and groups. A "diploma" and a bronze medal were awarded to each

"worthy" entry, but no championships were declared and no prize money offered except as official awards were privately supplemented. The Pennsylvania Agricultural Society, e.g., offered \$100 for the best Shorthorn herd.

In describing the animals, livestock journal writers were sometimes transported to heights of ecstasy that would make a Shorthorn Country reporter blush. A Rural New Yorker writer thus described one cow: "Her head and neck are lovely in the extreme; her horn fine and wax-like; her temper smooth as her glossy coat; her eyes, like those attributed to Juno, full of liquid light." The judges, however, must have been less impressed; the cow is not even mentioned in the official report!

The English cattle were not groomed for exhibition (horns were

## Willow Crest Shorthorns

Horned and Polled

## WE HAVE HAD A TERRIFIC YEAR "THANKS"

### FOR YOUR ENDORSEMENT OF OUR PROGRAM

#### at Illinois State Sale

The four top-selling bulls were bred by Willow Crest. Also res. champion female and one of the top-selling open heifers.

#### Central State Sale at Oskaloosa

We had champion female and 2nd top-selling bull. They were also the best pair.

Thanks also to all of our buyers in the last year.



Willow Crest Defender x - 2/3 interest sold for \$2725 to R. Lee Johnson & Family at Fredericktown, Ohio.

## BREEDING WITH YOU IN MIND

with

Ignition of Pin Oak x by Kelso Ignition x

and

Sutherland Chapman x by Sutherland Citation x

Jr. Herd Sire:

Pin Oak Cyclone x by Sutherland Apollo x

FOR SALE:

16-month-old polled bulls

4 by Ignition

2 by Chapman

30 heifers bred to Chapman & Cyclone

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No. 1

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unoiled, hair unclipped) as were the American cattle, pleasing one journalist, who preferred to see cattle shown in "their natural state." The Canadian cattle, said one observer, were "very fat, and better fitted for the butcher in their present condition, than the breeder." Some of the fat cattle, wrote another, were "monsters of fatness and inutility, save as advertisements for human folly, and the flesh and adipose producing powers of cattle fodder," but showed, according to another, "what must be done to make American roasts acceptable in foreign markets." Shorthorns and Shorthorn crosses comprised the major portion of the fat

cattle and work cattle shown. A pair of Shorthorns was the strongest team of oxen.

The 1876 Centennial was generally successful, but the Sesqui-Centennial, attracting almost two million fewer visitors, proved a financial failure. Finally liquidated in 1929, it reportedly lost \$50 million. The Breeder's Gazette, however, called its livestock show one of the major events in American animal husbandry. The cattle exhibit it described as the "greatest exhibit of breeding animals ever brought together."

Livestock came from 25 states; cattle numbered some 1,400 head. By

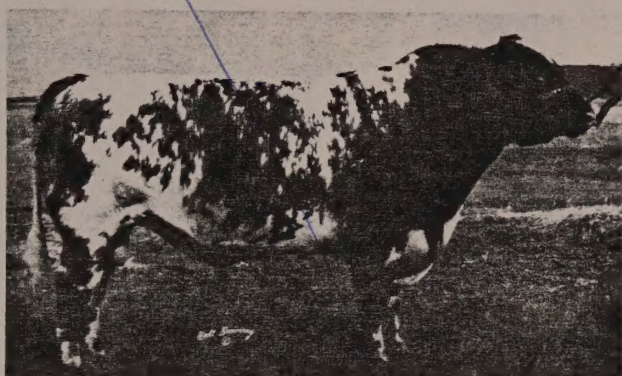
1926, Shorthorns had branched into three divisions, beef, Polled and Milking. Classes were provided for each: approximately 150 Shorthorns, from 17 herds; some 30 Polled Shorthorns from three herds; and 85 Milking Shorthorns from eight herds--plus a Shorthorn steer show. John R. Tomson, of Tomson Bros., Dover Kan., judged both Shorthorns and Polled Shorthorns; H. Barton, of Montreal, Milking Shorthorns.

Judging in 1926 followed the usual pattern of ranking in class and selecting champions among the first-prize winners. In addition, gold medals were awarded for grand championships.

After a lapse of 100, or even 50, years, it is difficult to reconstruct a wholly satisfactory picture of these two historic events. Even official records are incomplete, and more often lost; unofficial journal accounts mix personal bias, hyperbole, and gossip with solid observation. But this first hand research from official records and contemporary journals may stir a few memories among old timers, inform a new generation of "the way it was," and sketch another chapter in Shorthorn history.

There's nothing like a little experience to upset a theory.

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HOPE x  
And  
CLARK**

### Thanks

To Ippensen Polled Shorthorns that purchased our daughter of Leaders Pride 2nd x at the state sale. She was bred to Canadian Image and brought \$2,000 for one of the top prices of the day. We were really pleased that our consignment to the state sale sold to the older and respected herds in the business.

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